COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

ALFRED W. MARTIN

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AND
THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

BY

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	CHART SHOWING A SYNTHESIS OF RELIGIONS	viii
I.	INTRODUCTORY. THE EVOLUTION OF APPRECIATION	1
II.	SOURCES OF THE REVELATIONS OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION	10
III.	THE REVELATIONS OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION	14
IV.	EXPOSITION OF THE CHART—A SYNTHESIS OF RELIGIONS	32
V.	RESULTS OF THE REVELATIONS	48
VI.	AN ORGANIC FELLOWSHIP OF FAITHS	65
VII.	UNITY, NOT UNIFORMITY	79
VIII.	THE BAHAI MOVEMENT AND ITS MISSION	81
IX.	ETHICAL RELIGION AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE	92
X.	THE HISTORICAL RELIGIONS AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE	97
XI.	CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE	102
XII.	THE BIBLE AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE	115
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	121

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COMPARATIVE RELIGION
AND
THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

A SYNTHESIS OF RELIGIONS *

	Religion	Founder	Approximate Date When He Flourished	Bible	Deity
Aryan	Hinduism.....	Rishis	2000 B. C.	Vedas, Brahmanas, Upanishads, etc.	Agni, Indra, etc. Brahma
Aryan	Buddhism.....	Gautama	500 B. C.	Pitakas	(?)
Aryan	Zoroastrianism.	Zarathushtra	600 B. C. (?)	Avesta	Ahura-Mazda
Turanian	Confucianism..	Kung-Fu-tze (Confucius)	500 B. C.	The Five "Kings" and The Four "Books"	Tien; or Shang-Ti
Semitic	Judaism.....	Moses (?)	1300 B. C.	Old Testament	Yahweh
Semitic	Christianity....	Paul and Jesus	50 A. D. 28 A. D.	New Testament	God
Semitic	Mohammedanism.....	Mohammed	625 A. D.	Koran	Allah

* See pp. 32-47 for a detailed explanation of this chart.

A SYNTHESIS OF RELIGIONS *

Hereafter	"What Shall I Do to Be Saved?"	Dominant Note	Adherents (approximately)
Reunion with Brahma	Meditate on your oneness with Brahma "Thou art That"	The Divine in universal nature	200,000,000
Nirvana	Walk the "eightfold path" that leads to Nirvana	Moral self-discipline	450,000,000
Paradise Hell	Be industrious, truthful; perform the prescribed ceremonials	Conflict with evil and ultimate victory	100,000
(?)	Imitate Nature's calm unbroken order	Regulation of personal and social life	80,000,000
Sheol	Fulfill the law of righteousness	Righteousness	15,000,000
The Kingdom of God	"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ"	Faith—a mystic at-one-ment with Christ Jesus	450,000,000
Paradise Hell	Yield to Allah's Will	Submission (Islam)	250,000.000

* See pp. 32-47 for a detailed explanation of this chart.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY—THE EVOLUTION OF APPRECIATION

Three hundred and fifty years ago there was held at Agra, in India, the first parliament of religions. It was conceived, planned, and inaugurated by Akbar, the great Mogul emperor of India.

In 1575 he dedicated a magnificent structure called the Thadat Khana, or house of discussion, to the study of comparative religion. Here every Thursday evening he presided over an audience composed of representatives of the five great religions of India and their sects—Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Christianity. At each meeting a statement of the claims of one or

another of these systems of faith was presented by an accredited delegate and his address was followed by general discussion. Thus the tenets peculiar to each variety of religion were competently set forth and thereupon subjected to comment and criticism in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance, generated by the genial and broad-minded Akbar.

Out of this ferment of religious hospitality there was produced that remarkable book known as the *Dabistan,* an impartial report of the proceedings at these Thursday evening conferences. As an index of the catholicity and fraternalism that characterized the sessions let me quote a most noble sentence, spoken by one of the participants, a Mohammedan, of the Sufi sect: "If thou art a Mussulman, go stay with the Franks; if thou art a Shuite, go, mix with the Schismatics; if thou art a Christian, fellowship with the Jews. Whatever be thy religion, associate with those who think differently from thee. If thou canst mix with them freely and art not angered at hearing their discourse, thou hast attained

peace and art a master of creation." With this inspiring utterance let me couple the fervent exclamation of the Psalmist: "Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."[1] Together the two texts furnish a kind of spiritual setting in which to consider the subject before us. For, besides the intellectual purpose of acquainting us with the results of research in the field of comparative religion, these chapters have an ethical purpose for their main justification, namely, to make us more catholic in our sympathies, more just and generous in our attitude to foreign faiths, more magnanimous toward orthodox people less fortunate in their religion than we, more responsive to sources of inspiration that we were prone to neglect, more quick and keen to recognize Oriental graces of character in which our Occidental civilization is deficient. Above all is it the ethical purpose of our inquiry to make us more proficient in the practice of appreciation, that modern virtue to which the

[1] Ps. 83:1.

race, in its moral evolution, has been slowly climbing. How far we of the West are from this goal is evidenced by our reluctance to admit any indebtedness to the Far East, by our glib talk about the life of humanity, the service of humanity, and so forth, while persisting in identifying all that is alive and forward-looking in humanity with our Western civilization, contrasting the "progressive West" with the "stagnant and immobile East" and complacently echoing the familiar line of Tennyson:

Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay.

In the recently published *Legacy of Rome* four of the writers identified the Roman Empire with "the whole civilized world." Even Dean Inge, writing in the *London Evening Standard,* committed the same breach of broadmindedness and justice, implying that civilization ended abruptly in the fifth century on the western frontier of Parthia and that the arts, poetry, philosophy, and religion of

China and India were the output of peoples emerging from barbarism! What contribution, it is asked, in all seriousness, has the Far East made to human culture? We admit a measure of merit in Chinese porcelains, Japanese color-prints and Indian textile fabrics; we admit that in such matters the Far East has something to teach the West. But toward the philosophy, religion, and ethics of Oriental peoples the prevailing Occidental attitude is one of contemptuous indifference or of hostile criticism. Such are some of the indices of our stage in the moral evolution of the race toward the ideal of appreciation.

Time was, when, in Christian countries, persecution was thought to be ethically warranted, when those in ecclesiastical authority, assuming that they alone had the only true religion, believed themselves divinely ordained to suppress dissenters and so vindicate and spread "God's truth." If persuasion failed, they resorted to imprisonment; when that proved ineffectual, they tried the lash. As a final measure they condemned dissenters to

the stake, hoping by fire to exterminate both heresy and heretics. How often, oh, how often, have ecclesiastical despots sought to crush free thought and free speech by burning the books and the bodies of authors whose convictions were brighter than flames and like asbestos withstood the fire intended to consume them! True, the traces of such forms of persecution are entirely extinct, but the spirit of it still survives, though the forms have taken on a milder mien. To-day the Christian persecutes the Jew and the Jew the Christian; Romanism persecutes Protestantism, orthodox Protestantism persecutes liberal Christianity; and even liberal Christianity has been found persecuting the religion that cannot call itself Christian.

A step upward in the direction of the modern ideal was taken when forbearance replaced persecution, when latitude was admitted in theology no less than in geography and the distinction drawn between essentials and non-essentials in religion; when dissenters were reluctantly allowed to hold their heresies with-

out fear of molestation or threat. And when at length, tolerance was substituted for forbearance, it meant that a new attitude was taken toward dissenters, because tolerance is the *willing* consent to let others hold opinions different from our own, while forbearance is the *un*willing consent. Yet even this attitude, noble as it is, cannot be regarded as the acme of spiritual attainment. For, tolerance always implies a measure of concession. We tolerate what we cannot help but would suppress if we could. Tolerance has an air of patronizing condescension about it. He who tolerates affects a certain offensive superiority, exhibits spiritual conceit. Clearly, then, it cannot be true that tolerance marks the acme of spiritual attainment, or that it is "the loveliest flower on the rose-bush of liberalism," to quote a distinguished Unitarian divine of the last century. Lovelier far is appreciation, which, while wholly free from the blemish that mars the beauty of tolerance, adds to that beauty fresh graces all its own. Appreciation is dissatisfied with tolerance, despises

mere forbearance, blushes at persecution. It restrains us from ridiculing beliefs that to us are superstitions and from looking upon our own cherished beliefs as final; rather does appreciation bid us realize our own finitude and the immense firmament of thought under which we move, watchful for each new star the guiding heavens may reveal. Toward every established system of belief appreciation takes the evolutionary point of view, judging it not only statically, by what it was at the start, but also dynamically, by what it has become in the course of the centuries. Toward the Bibles of the great religions, appreciation takes an eclectic attitude, seeking from each what can be borrowed for the enriching and deepening of the moral life. Toward the founders of these religions, appreciation takes a reverential, docile attitude. Before each of them it bows, be he the Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Mohammed, Moses, or Jesus; not indeed that all are to be equally estimated, but each is to be evaluated according to the truth he had to teach and the inspiration that may

be derived from the story of his life and work. Toward the great religions themselves appreciation takes the organic viewpoint. It conceives of each religion as a member of a family of religions, a part of a whole, an organ of an organism, each having some excellence not possessed by the rest and therefore to be contributed by it to them, and receiving in return the manifold contributions of all the others toward its own enhancement. In the eyes of appreciation all the great religions and their sects are likened to the stops and pedals of a great organ, some emphasizing the essential, others the ornamental notes, none of itself yielding the full-orbed music, but the harmonious blending of their individual melodies producing the great symphony of human aspiration and faith.

CHAPTER II

SOURCES OF THE REVELATIONS OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

The supreme ethical value of the revelations of comparative religion is that they serve to cultivate in us this virtue of appreciation. But before we note the manner in which this spiritual gain is vouchsafed to us, we must turn to the revelations themselves. What are they and whence do they derive? Beginning with the latter question, we owe these revelations directly to the discovery of the Bibles of the great religions. Spaniards discovered the Koran. When, in 711, the Moors crossed from northern Africa into Spain, they brought with them a book for which they made the most astounding claim. They held that if every existing copy of this book were to be destroyed the world would not be the poorer, because an original, everlasting copy is pre-

served by the throne of Allah and, by means of relays of angels, it could be recommunicated in full to mankind. This "word of God," as the Mohammedans called it, was the Koran, the sacred book of their religion.

Germans were the discoverers of the Confucian scriptures, some of them edited by the Sage himself and others the work of his own moral genius and that of successors. About the middle of the fourteenth century, certain German travelers found their way to a rich and densely populated country they called Cathay, but later learned to designate as China. Here they discovered a wealth of religious and moral literature, the five "Kings" and the four "Books," conspicuous for their teaching on business and domestic ethics. Together these works constitute the Bible of Confucianism and, like the Koran, they have been translated into all the leading languages of Europe.

It was a Frenchman, Anquetil du Perron, who, while browsing in the imperial library at Paris, in 1784, came upon a collection of dusty

sheets of manuscript, written in a Sanskrit dialect. These proved to be a portion of the Zoroastrian Bible, the Avesta. Wishing to know more of this literature and of these people, Anquetil went to Bombay, in north-western India, where, for over a thousand years, a colony of Zoroastrian exiles from Persia had established themselves. Anquetil spent three years among them, learning their language, and chancing upon one hundred and eighty-two manuscripts, similar to the sheets he had discovered in the Paris library, the grand total, composing all that we have of the sacred books of the Parsees, or Zoroastrians.

When, in 1787, the British took possession of India, that great commercial enterprise led to the discovery of the oldest part of what is probably the oldest Bible in the world, the Rig-Veda, consisting of some 1,017 hymns in praise of the personified forces of Nature. Add to the Rig-Veda the other three Vedas, the Yajur, Sama, and Atharva, subsequently discovered; the Aranyakas, or "Forest Medi-

tations," the Upanishads and the two great epics of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana,* and we have a compendium of sacred Hindu literature over four times as large as the Old and New Testaments. Later, still other Indian books were discovered, which proved to be the sacred literature of the Buddhists—the Pitakas. The very letters of these books were regarded as having a sanctity of their own, so they were counted, just as the letters of the New Testament were counted in the days when men thought that not only its teaching, but also its letters were "inspired." Comparing the total number of letters in the Pitakas with those in the New Testament we find that there are eight times as many in the former as there are in the latter. Such, in brief, are the sources whence the revelations of comparative religion derive.

CHAPTER III

THE REVELATIONS OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Given these discovered Bibles of Mohammedanism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, the material was at hand for a comparative study of them and the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures. What has that study disclosed? What are the revelations of comparative religion as made manifest in the sacred books of the seven extant great religions? Incidentally it may be noted that the religion of ancient Egypt disappeared with the civilization that cherished it. The Assyrian and Babylonian religions passed away in like manner, though not without contributing important elements to Judaism and through Judaism to Christianity. The religion of ancient Greece gave place to that of Rome and the religion of Rome was forthwith supplanted by Christianity, the latter judiciously

borrowing (in its proselytizing work) rites and ceremonies that have survived in modified forms in our Christmas and Easter festivals.

1. First among the revelations of comparative religion of which we must take notice is the universality of such moral sentiments and precepts as truthfulness, temperance, justice, kindliness, patience, love, etc. Far from being the exclusive characteristic of any one religion these moral ideas and ideals are inculcated in the Bibles of all religions. Take, for example, the moral sentiment of catholicity or broadmindedness, a generous hospitable attitude toward religions different from one's own.

In the Hindu Bible we read: "Altar flowers are of many species, but all worship is one. Systems of faith differ, but God is One. The object of all religions is alike; all seek the object of their love, and all the world is love's dwelling place."

The corresponding passage from the Buddhist Bible reads: "The root of religion is to reverence one's own faith and never to revile

the faith of others. My doctrine makes no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. It is like the sky; it has room for all, and like water it washes all alike."

And these noble sentences have their equivalent in the Zoroastrian Bible: "Have the religions of mankind no common ground? Is there not everywhere the same enrapturing beauty? Broad indeed is the carpet which God has spread, and many are the colors which He has given it. Whatever road I take joins the highway that leads to the Divine."

The selfsame sentiment appears in the Confucian scriptures: "Religions are many and different, but reason is one. Humanity is the heart of man, and justice is the path of man. The broad-minded see the truth in different religions; the narrow-minded see only the differences."

In the Jewish scriptures we read: "Wisdom in all ages entering into holy souls maketh them friends of God and Prophets." "Are we not all children of one Father? Hath not one God created us?"

Finally, in the Christian scriptures it is written: "God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that revereth Him and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him." "He hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth."

2. Second among the revelations of comparative religion is the universality of such spiritual sentiments as reverence, awe, wonder, aspiration, worship—these, too, far from being the peculiar possession of any one religion are common to all. Take, for illustration, the religious sentiment of trust in its relation to man's survival of death—the trust that we humans are "not dust merely, that returns to dust," that besides our empirical self there exists also a spiritual self which therefore persists when the psycho-physical self vanishes; the trust that eternality is the mark of our essential selfhood, the "numen" in every child of man.

Beginning again with the Hindu scriptures, we read: "Give to the plants and to the waters thy body which belongs to them; but there

is an immortal portion of thee, transport it to the world of the holy."

In the Zoroastrian Avesta we find these sentences: "On the last day questions will be asked only as to what you have done, not from whom you are descended. I fear not death; I fear only not having lived well enough."

From the Pitakas of the Buddhists we cull: "The soul is myself; the body is only my dwelling place."

The Confucian Bible declares: "Man never dies. It is because men see only their bodies that they hate death."

In the Mohammedan scripture we find this passage: "Mortals ask 'What property has a man left behind him?' but angels ask 'What good deeds has he sent on before him?' "

In the Jewish Apocrypha we read: "The memorial of virtue is immortal. When it is present men take example of it, and when it is gone they desire it."

Finally, the Christian scriptures contain the familiar words: "Though our outward man

perish, yet is our inward man day by day renewed."

3. A third revelation of comparative religion relates to the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament. What do we find? In the first place we find that the ethical content of the Decalogue (which excludes only three of the commandments) is wanting in none of the other six Bibles. Secondly, we find that the familiar Decalogue might well be supplemented by four commandments contributed by unfamiliar Bibles. The Koran contains a commandment concerning cleanliness and another on humaneness, or kindness to animals. The Hindu Upanishads and the Confucian Analects unite in enjoining the practice of intellectual honesty—still one of the crying needs of the religious world where the temptation is so great to juggle with words, to reinterpret ancient phrases in unethical ways, to sell one's intellectual birthright for the pottage of social position or business success. The fifth of the ten commandments in the Buddhist Pitakas reads:

"Thou shalt drink no intoxicating drink," an injunction paralleled in the Mohammedan Koran but missing in the Christian code—a serious defect in the estimation of Buddhists and Mohammedans, no less than of the millions of Christian prohibitionists.

4. More impressive, however, than any of the revelations of which we have thus far taken account is the universality of the Golden Rule, supposed, by those whose Bible reading has been restricted to the Old and New Testaments, to have originated with Jesus, but, in truth, antedating him by centuries and already very ancient in the time of Confucius. Each of the seven Bibles of the extant great religions contains a version of the Golden Rule, which, strictly speaking, is not a rule at all, because it does not tell us what to do; it only sets forth the spirit that should be back of our conduct, leaving it to us to find the appropriate deed. Here are the seven differing forms in which the Golden Rule has been given expression in the world's great faiths:

The Hindu: "The true rule of life is to

guard and do by the things of others as they do by their own."

The Buddhist: "One should seek for others the happiness one desires for oneself."

The Zoroastrian: "Do as you would be done by."

The Chinese: "What you do not wish done to yourself, do not unto others."

The Mohammedan: "Let none of you treat your brother in a way he himself would dislike to be treated."

The Jewish: "Whatever you do not wish your neighbor to do to you, do not unto him."

The Christian: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them."

5. Comparative religion has given us for a fifth revelation, the likeness of religion to a tree which began as a seed and gradually became differentiated into branches, twigs, leaves, yet all the while retaining its unity by reason of the sap that flows through every part of the total organism. So religion began as a seed of thought concerning man's relation to

the universe or to the Power or Powers which he thought of as governing it. This seed-thought promptly generated feeling and conduct—the other two constituent elements of religion. Gradually religion became differentiated into religions, sects, subsects, yet all the while retaining a unity because of the common spirit of reverence, aspiration, worship that flows through every part of the total religious organism. Hence it happens that differences of climate, of environment, of education, of racial origin have given differing forms of expression to one and the same spiritual sentiment. Whether, then, it be the Aztec bowing before his shapeless block, or the New Zealander squatting before his feathered god, or the Moslem prostrate in front of his mosque, or the Christian kneeling in prayer to his Heavenly Father, or the cosmic theist communing with "the Infinite and Eternal Energy whence all things proceed," or the founder of the Ethical Movement meditating on "the Ethical Manifold," conscious of himself as "an infinitesimal part of the Infinite God, the

Spiritual Commonwealth"—in each case it is the yearning for a higher and purer type of personal life that has been expressed. Hence, too, it happens that Christian institutions like the clergy and the church have their parallels in religions which originated centuries before Christianity. And, again, forms like baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Mass, all have their prototypes in religious systems antedating the Christian, because of this universality of spiritual sentiments which the study of comparative religion reveals.

Listen to the Hindu chanting his prayer to Varuna, the god of conduct; how it calls to mind one of the Old Testament psalms, or perchance one of the Babylonian collection of "penitential psalms," or, perhaps, the familiar refrain of the Episcopalian Litany, "Have mercy, O Lord, upon us and incline our hearts to keep Thy law."

"O Varuna, thou bright and shining god, to thee I turn. I have strayed from the path of righteousness: have mercy, Almighty, have mercy. It was wine, it was dice, it was temp-

tation: have mercy, Almighty, have mercy. Save us, O Varuna, from the sins inherited from our fathers and save us also from the sins we ourselves commit: have mercy, Almighty, have mercy. O Varuna, thou great and powerful god, keep me from erring in the way of the wicked; remember the weakness of my will; I yield myself to thy pity and thy help: have mercy, Almighty, have mercy."

Hear the Parsee's prayer for purity and how slight a change in its vocabulary would be needed to make it suit the spiritual need of even the most radical of thinkers. Six centuries before our era, perhaps earlier still, this prayer was breathed from Zoroastrian lips:

"With venerating desire for the gift of purity I pray for the blessing of the bountiful spirit of Ahura-Mazda. Teach me to know thy laws that I may walk by the help of thy pure spirit, for he who knows purity knows Ahura-Mazda. To such an one thou art father, brother, friend. May my actions toward all men be performed in harmony with the divine Righteousness and may I possess

those attributes which are at one with Thy good mind. May the needed spiritual help be bestowed, not for a time only, but for eternity."

Read the second of the Buddhist Pitakas, the Dhamma, or Path, and though you may not believe in reincarnation, nor in Nirvana—the two cardinal doctrines of Gotama's faith—yet in the "noble eightfold path" you find the credentials of a religion that speaks to you in accents clear, strong, beautiful, persuasive, and at times sublime.

6. In the light of the five revelations of comparative religion thus far considered we readily recognize a sixth, namely, the utter impropriety of perpetuating the old-time classification of religions into "true and false," "revealed and natural," "divine and human," "Christian and Pagan." Even the most biased of orthodox believers who yet has patience to peruse the ethical and religious portions of the five Bibles—not so familiar as the remaining two—will admit that such a classification has been rendered obsolete and unwarranted by the

revelations of comparative religion. They have given rise to modes of classification that presuppose no such invidious distinctions as were born of ignorance and prejudice, but frankly recognizing the elements of truth, beauty, and inspiration present in all seven of the great religions, they have been grouped according to racial and linguistic relationships. So considered the seven are classified under three distinct heads. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Zoroastrianism constitute the *Aryan* group. Buddhism arose as a protest against certain features of Hinduism as it was in the sixth century before our era, while Zoroastrianism was undifferentiated from Hinduism in the period prior to the great migrations. Indeed, the linguistic relationship of these two systems of faith gives proof of their original oneness. By a simple system of phonetic changes the names of Hindu deities can be transformed into their Zoroastrian equivalents. Belonging to the *Semitic* group are Judaism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism. Here, too, linguistic as well as theological and ethical

ties give ground for the grouping of these three under one head.

Confucianism, standing in no racial or linguistic relationship to either of the other groups, is separately classified under the head of *Turanian,* a generic title intended to embrace all religions that are neither Aryan nor Semitic. In passing, it may be remarked that all attempts at a *chronological* classification of the great religions have hitherto failed. For, while it is obvious that Christianity is younger than Judaism and Mohammedanism than Christianity, and that Buddhism was born after Hinduism had been extant for a millennium or more, the question of antiquity remains unsolved for Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, and the religion of China. There are those who claim that the last mentioned is the oldest. Others hold that the palm of ancientness must be awarded to India and still others who would bequeath it to Persia. Thus, a generally satisfying chronological classification of the religions of the world is rendered impossible.

7. To every unbiased student of comparative religion it must be apparent that not Christianity alone but all religions face the same way, that is, toward an ideal of life. All hold before their adherents a mental picture of what it is supremely desirable to be, and this common possession and presentation of an ideal of personal life may be set down as a seventh revelation of comparative religion. In the old royal forest of Fontainebleau the paths are so laid out as to converge in a large open space called a star. People may be walking in many different directions, they may come from various parts of the forest, but from whatever quarter they come they all meet at last at the central star. In the forest of religion the passion for the perfect is such a star. Many and varied are the paths which the great religions have laid out but they all converge at that central spot of spiritual sunshine—the passion for the perfect. All religions then are one because of this common hunger for the realization of an ideal of life.

8. Turn we now to an eighth in the suc-

cession of revelations engaging our attention. Christianity has been repeatedly defined as the religion that teaches the brotherhood of man. But comparative religion reveals the fact that all the great religions inculcate this doctrine. Permit me just here to express the hope that no reader will misunderstand my references to Christianity as compared with other religions. If any words of mine on this point be construed as manifesting a hostile or unkindly spirit, they will be *mis*construed and it will be in regretted contradiction of my purpose if I let fall a single careless word that shall wound the reverence of even the most sensitive of my readers. Since all the religions of mankind teach the doctrine of human brotherhood it follows that no one of them can be *defined* in terms of that doctrine. All the way from the founder of Hinduism to Abdul Baha, the Bahai prophet, the brotherhood of man has been an integral part of religious teaching. But comparative religion calls us to note the further and more important fact, namely, that, while all religions teach this inspiring doctrine,

the *basis* upon which they set it forth differs in each case. For instance, Buddhism based the doctrine on the belief that all men are enmeshed in the same net of suffering and all are subject to the law of Karma and reincarnation.

Zoroastrianism taught that all men are brothers because all have been summoned to soldiery in a great cosmic warfare under a divine commander-general, Ahura-Mazda, to win an age-long battle against the enemy, Angro-Mainyus and his demons.

Confucianism based its doctrine of brotherhood on the consciousness of a common task devolving upon all mankind—to master and practice the precepts of the Sage. Christianity based its teaching of brotherhood on belief in the Fatherhood of God and the need of all men for salvation through Jesus Christ. The Ethical Movement, it may be said in passing, also teaches human brotherhood, but on the ground that every human being has worth, that is, value on his own account, regardless of the value he may have as a means to others'

ends; in other words, on the ground that there is a moral nature in all men with latent potentialities in each for approximating perfection. Consequently, it will not do to define Christianity as "the religion that teaches the brotherhood of man" because that definition is loose, inaccurate; it does not define, but touches only on that which is common to all religions.

9. Once more, comparative religion shows us that while all the great religious systems deal with the same fundamental issues—God, immortality, duty, salvation—the *mode* of dealing with these is in no two instances the same. All alike raise the root-questions of religion— What is the chief end of man? What shall I do to be saved?—but the answers differ in every case. To borrow a simile of the German dramatist, Herder, the religions are like the strings of a harp, each of which has its own distinctive note. It is this ninth of the revelations of comparative religion that I have sought to visualize by means of the chart which forms the frontispiece of this book.

CHAPTER IV

EXPOSITION OF THE CHART—A SYNTHESIS OF RELIGIONS

Turning to this chart it will be seen that in the column on the extreme left the seven extant great religions are listed according to the racial and linguistic bases of classification referred to on page 26. The second column includes the names of the founders of these religions, so far as known. In the case of Hinduism, which harks back to Vedism, or the religion of the Vedas, as its earliest form, we know not the name of the founder. We know only that this religion originated with the hymns composed by the "Rishis" or poet-priests, in part preserved for us in the Rig-Veda. The founder of Buddhism is commonly known by his family name, Gautama, but in the Pitakas he is called "Bhagavat," the

Blessed One; "Siddhartha," like his predecessors; "Tathagata," one in whom wishes are fulfilled; "Cakya-Muni," monk of the Cakya tribe. "Zarathushtra" is the proper substitute for the popular but incorrect "Zoroaster" while Confucius is the Latinized form of Kung-Fu-Tze, the master Kung.

It may be that Abraham should have been set down as the founder of Israel's religion, rather than Moses, but the Genesis record of the patriarch's life is so wrapped in legendary lore as to forbid our ascribing to him any other function of leadership than that of heading the caravan from Ur in Chaldea and laying the foundations of a new nation in the West. As for the later stages in the development of the religion of Israel, we are not unmindful of the part played by the prophets and by Ezra—yet of all the names identified with the beginnings of this religion, that of Moses would seem to be the most warranted. From the New Testament book of the Acts and from the Epistles it is plain that the *immediate* founder of Christianity was the

apostle Paul. Yet it is equally plain that without Jesus there could not have been an *apostle* Paul. Moreover, all the while that he was engaged in missionary work, forces of a moral and spiritual nature were operative that emanated not from Paul but from Jesus. Hence Paul and Jesus must be regarded as joint founders of Christianity.[1]

With regard to the dates when these Founders were at the zenith of their influence it should be noted that in the case of the Rishis who wrote the Rig-Veda their compositions are at least as old as 2000 B. C.

Gautama was born in 550 B.C., and from the Pitakas we learn that he was about fifty years old when his success as a religious reformer was fully assured.

Professor A. V. Williams Jackson, the foremost living American authority on Zoroastrianism, favors 600 B.C. as the approximate date for Zarathushtra's efflorescence, though the date of his birth has been set by other scholars

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[1] For a fuller discussion of this point see the author's *Dawn of Christianity,* Chap. III.

as far back at 1000 B.C. and as far forward as 300 B.C.

Confucius, it will be observed, was a contemporary of the Buddha, even as was Heraclitus in Greece and Nehemiah in Palestine.

If the date of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt was 1320 B.C., as the late Professor Toy and other authorities incline to believe, we are warranted in fixing 1300 B.C. as the time at which Moses reached the zenith of his power.

The apostle Paul outlived Jesus some thirty years and 4 B.C. is now generally regarded as the year in which Jesus was born.

The Mohammedan Hegira, 622 A.D.—the flight of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina —marked the beginning of the Islamic calendar and three years later he was at the apex of his reformatory career.

The fourth column presents the names of the various sacred books or Bibles of the great religions.

In every instance, excepting only the Pitakas of Buddhism and the Koran of Mo-

hammedanism, these Bibles represent a growth covering centuries. Only the chief constituent parts of the Hindu Bible are here given, the sacred literature in its entirety being the work of twenty centuries or more. The Pitakas (baskets) of Buddhism are (1) the Vinaya, containing the rules for the monastic order; (2) the Dhamma, or ethical teachings of the Master; (3) the Abhiddamma, or metaphysical basis on which the ethical system is built. The Avesta, too, has its divisions metaphysical, ethical, ceremonial. Four of the five "Kings" (Web) of the Confucian sacred literature antedate the founder by centuries; the four "Books," the Analects, or Table-Talk of Confucius, the Doctrine of the Mean, the Great Learning, and Mencius date from the death of the Sage. Fifteen distinct types of literature are included in the Bible of Judaism and its evolution covered nearly fifteen centuries. The fourfold division of the New Testament is familiar and need not detain us. From its earliest book, the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, to its latest, the Second Epistle

of Peter, a century and a half is covered. Of the Koran it should be said that the principles and methods of the higher criticism have already been applied to it, enabling us to read in chronological sequence its 114 suras and thus to trace the development of Mohammed's life and work.

What the seven great religions have to say regarding theism as summed up in the names of the deities is indicated in the fifth column of the chart.

Only opposite Buddhism has it been necessary to insert an interrogation mark, for while the Buddha believed in the Hindu pantheon, he thought its gods were, like human beings, subject to the law of Karma. Above these was a supreme place, but this Gautama left vacant because for him there was no Over-Soul, no permanent ultimate source of all that is, only "a continuous flux." In *this* sense the Buddha was an atheist.

Zoroastrianism holds that *coeval* with Ahura-Mazda, though not *coeternal* with him, is Angro-Mainyus. Eventually the former,

the Good Principle, will triumph over the latter, the Evil Principle. Hence, while temporarily dualistic, Zoroastrianism is essentially monotheistic, anticipating the ultimate reign of Ahura-Mazda alone.

Confucius preferred the impersonal term "Tien," meaning "Heaven," to the personal, anthropomorphic "Shang-Ti," "Heavenly Lord," a preference quite in keeping with his agnostic attitude to supramundane matters.

The Hebrew "Yahweh," formerly misnamed "Jehovah," represents a theistic conception that underwent a prolonged evolutionary process, the stages of which can be clearly traced in the Old Testament books when chronologically arranged.

Christianity adopted the generic name "God," which the postexilian Jews had substituted for the provincial name "Yahweh." When the postexilian prophets had reached the conviction that Yahweh was God of all the world and not of Israel alone, they renounced the restricting appellation "Yahweh" and

adopted the universal term "Elohim" ("God").

Passing to the column that epitomizes the different conceptions of life after death we note the reappearance of an interrogation mark, but this time opposite Confucianism. For here it was that the agnosticism of the founder took on its most explicit manifestation. Again and again in the Confucian scriptures he is represented as confronted by disciples with questions concerning death and what comes after death. Invariably he made answer by pointing to the unfulfilled duties of the present life: "While you do not know life how can you know about death or the hereafter?"

Opposite Hinduism we read "reunion with Brahma." But this belief was reached only late in the development of this religion. The primitive Vedism taught a doctrine of heaven and hell and only after many centuries did a Hindu, speculating on the possibility of dying a second time in Heaven, arrive at the theory of successive reincarnations with ultimate re-

union of the individual atman (soul) with the universal Atman, Brahma, whence all souls originally came.

Buddhism held out to its devoteés the hope of reaching Nirvana, but it was never defined by the Buddha in *positive* terms. Whenever in his sermons or elsewhere, Gautama referred to Nirvana it was always as that blessed state in which reincarnation has forever ceased. Of the state itself he preferred not to speak; it was beyond human ken.

The Zoroastrian Avesta furnishes us a graphic account of "the four Paradises" and "the four Hells" in the twenty-second *Yast.*

Of the Hebrew conception of the hereafter as found in the Old Testament we have to say that, in the main, it does not rise above the belief in Sheol, the underworld to which the good and bad alike departed after death. Only in a few isolated passages do we find a gleam of hope that something other than the colorless shadowy existence of Sheol awaits the children of men. Not till the second century before our era and in the Apocryphal

Wisdom of Solomon do we meet with the first explicit statement of a doctrine of personal immortality—conscious, active, joyous life beyond the grave.[2]

Every careful reader of the New Testament will have observed the oneness of Jesus and Paul in their anticipation of a new order of society, a Kingdom of Heaven on earth, to be miraculously established by divine agency.[3]

In no other religion do the ideas of heaven and hell take on more realistic and fantastic forms than in the Mohammedan. And yet the Koran makes it clear that there are spiritual as well as physical delights to be anticipated by those who "do the will of Allah."

Conditional upon the attainment of post-mortem felicity is the practice of a prescribed order of thought and action. Conceiving salvation as synonymous with such future well-being these religions have their respective answers to the question, What shall I do to be saved? Hinduism, in its most highly developed form, bids the believer meditate upon the

[2] Wisd. of Sol. 1:23-2:4.
[3] Matt. 13, *passim;* Eph. 4, *passim.*

relation of the individual atman to the World-Atman. Let each come to a *realization* of his oneness with the soul of the universe and when, at last, he reaches the point where that sense of oneness is complete and absolute, he is saved; that is, rebirth into the human terrestrial world for him has ceased. When a mortal has recognized Brahma, feeling, "He is myself," all further desire to cling to terrestrial life has ceased. The culminating thought of both Veda and Upanishads is summarized in the solemn expression *tat tvam asi,* "Thou are That." In other words, the essence of man is itself Brahma. When once the wise man has seen That (*tad apaçyat*) he becomes That (*tad abhavat*) because in truth he always was and is That (*tad asit*). Hence the final attainment of man is this knowledge, this realization; it is the "works" of the Jew, and the "faith" of the Christian; salvation by the complete ascendancy of the divine in one's self.

Buddhism, beginning with "the four noble truths" about suffering (the fact of suffering, its cause, its cure, the way to its cure),

finds the way out to be an ethical self-discipline called "the eightfold path" (explained in full detail in the great sermons of the Buddha). Whosoever takes that "path" arrives at salvation from rebirth—Nirvana. For Buddhism, like Hinduism, has ever looked on reincarnation as something to be escaped more than aught else.

To be saved, according to Zoroastrianism, means to share with Ahura-Mazda the ultimate victory over Angro-Mainyus in the cosmic battle of Right against Wrong, a battle in which every human being is called to be a soldier on the side of the sovereign Lord.

Confucianism, agnostic on the subject of the hereafter, not denying its reality, but simply confessing utter ignorance of what comes after death, preferred to confine its attention to this world, to salvation from its discords and disorders, a goal to be attained by reproduction in all personal and social relations of the calm, unbroken order of the solar system.

The religion of the Old Testament, with its

sad, somber outlook toward Sheol, conceived salvation in terms of at-one-ment with God here on earth and made fulfillment of the "law of righteousness" the condition of that oneness.

Christianity as presented by the apostle Paul made salvation—from "the wrath to come"—consist in the practice of "faith," a mystical self-assimilation with Christ, so that one could say with the apostle, "It is not I that act but Christ that dwelleth in me."

Islam means submission in utter self-surrender to the will of the "omnipotent, merciful One," merciful because omnipotent. In such submission Mohammedanism sees the way to salvation from the misery awaiting those who act contrary to that will.

No careful reading of the Bibles of the great religions can fail to take cognizance of the fact that dominant in each is a certain note serving to distinguish each religion from all the rest. Not only in the Vedas, with their reiteration of man's dependence on the gods—the personified forces of Nature—but also and

more impressively in the Upanishads, the philosophic-religious prose-poems of the Hindu Bible, do we get the thought of the universe as thrilling, throbbing, pulsing with divine energy and divine meaning, so that this is irresistibly accepted as the dominant note of Hinduism.

Similarly in the Dhamma, with its one hundred and eighty-six sermons of the Buddha, the conviction is driven home, over and over again, that the one thing most needful in life is moral self-discipline in the manner laid down by Gautama. Hence, this is inevitably settled upon as the dominant note of Buddhism.

Without pausing to illustrate the parallels in the case of the other religions, obvious as they must be to every reader of the sacred books, let us look for a moment at the last of the series of columns in this synthesis of religions. Reliable statistics on matters pertaining to religion are most difficult of access, particularly in regard to the number of devoteés claimed for each of the seven great religions. Hence, any statistical list that may be pre-

pared is certain to be adversely criticized in one or more particulars. What is here offered has been modestly put forward as merely approximating accuracy, subject to revision with every improvement in statistical study. Accepting, meanwhile, the data submitted in the ninth column of the chart, it is significant that only one-third of the world's population is Christian. Out of a total of nearly a billion and a half, only 450 millions are Christians—a fact which has led many a thoughtful follower of Jesus and Paul to question the notion that God would consign two-thirds of the people on the earth to everlasting perdition because they accepted some other than the Christian scheme of salvation.

That there should be but a hundred thousand Zoroastrians is largely accounted for in terms of their exclusiveness, their religion forbidding intermarriage with members of another persuasion. Only some ten thousand reside in Persia, the remainder are descendants of those exiles who in 1648 refused to become Moslems and found in Bombay a hospitable

refuge from Islamic persecution. The controversy is still being waged as to the relative strength of Buddhism and Christianity. Adherents of the former are fully persuaded that there are more Buddhists than Christians in the world, while zealous Christian missionaries are quick to contend for the precedence of their religion over all others, not only in point of numbers but also of ethical sublimity and saving power. Till the controversy shall have been settled to the mutual satisfaction of the rival parties it were best to be content with assigning to each of these religions a like number of adherents, realizing, moreover, that in so doing we are *approximately* correct.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS OF THE REVELATIONS

It was in the wake of these revelations of comparative religion that there appeared in the United States some sixty years ago a cosomopolitanism in religion analogous to the political cosmopolitanism of the eighteenth century. The latter stood for a relationship among all the peoples of the earth in which national distinctions were to be completely obliterated in a blaze of universal brotherhood. It aimed to make all men and women like the courier who sat next me on the train from Naples to Rome—a man who, having traveled very extensively, had been brought into contact with people from all parts of the world and declared that as a consequence of these contacts he had learned to strip himself of all national characteristics, and proudly styled himself a cosmopolite. So this religious

cosmopolitanism of the last century had a corresponding aim, to obliterate all sectarian distinctions in a blaze of universal religion. It focused attention on the points of resemblance in the various religions and exploited them in sermons and lectures, in books and tracts. It created a composite picture of the religions said to be more beautiful and satisfying than the portraiture of any one of them taken alone, a religion not Jewish nor Christian, not Mohammedan nor Buddhist nor any other single type, but the religion of universal man. Conspicuous among the representatives of this religious cosmopolitanism were Octavius Frothingham, Francis E. Abbot, William J. Potter, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Samuel Johnson, Samuel Longfellow, David Wasson, John Weiss—all of them prominently identified with the Free Religious Association of America, an organization which did more than any other in its day to popularize such revelations of comparative religion as had then come to light. All these men had the melting pot idea applied to religion, melting away all the

distinguishing features of the great religions in the interest of a nonsectarian cosmopolitanism, a fellowship that would embrace all mankind. Even so, the political cosmopolitanism of to-day gives symbolic expression to its faith in the passing of nationalities by melting in an iron pot the flags of all the various nations and then drawing forth the flag of universal man! Thus the religious situation in the last half of the nineteenth century was analogous to the political in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. But, as in the case of the latter so in the former, a reaction set in. In the one it was away from cosmopolitanism to nationalism, in the other, away from universalism to sectarianism. Recall for a moment the reaction as it appeared in the political world. It was heralded by the publication, early in 1914, of Professor Adolf Harnack's essay on "Deutsche Kultur," in which he took the ground that German civilization has all the excellences found in other nations plus certain acquisitions peculiar to Germany alone. "Deutsche Kultur," he held,

was a "pleroma"—a fullness of content, consisting of everything admirable in the culture of other nationalities together with elements all its own and therefore it was a Kultur worthy of adoption by all the other nations of the earth. Then came the Englishman, Cramb, and the Scotchman, McNaughton, to tell us of the virtues of the Anglo-Saxon type. For them the white man's burden was none other than to foist this type upon all other peoples as being clearly "the best." Next in chronological order came a Serbian, making no extravagant claims for his nation's attainments, but modestly, yet enthusiastically, bidding the rest of the world keep its eye on Serbia because she would yet develop the type of civilization which all would be eager to adopt. And then came Mr. Theodore Roosevelt to bespeak America's claim to recognition but on which we need not dwell as it has long since been made familiar at home and abroad.

Now, the corresponding reaction in the religious realm was signalized by the appearance of James Freeman Clarke's *Ten Great*

Religions. I confess to some diffidence in citing this book for I recall the remark made to me by Dr. James Martineau, the foremost liberal theologian of the nineteenth century, "Freeman Clarke is the New Englander whom I venerate most since the time of Channing." Moreover, I am mindful of the fact that this book was first published sixty years ago when the science of comparative religion was still in its infancy. But after due allowance has been made for the great name of its author and the pioneer character of his book, the *Ten Great Religions* is unreservedly and avowedly sectarian. It is typical of the Christocentric method of approaching the non-Christian faiths, namely, looking upon Christianity as the absolute religion and estimating the worth of all others in terms of its absoluteness. Professor Jevons of Durham University, England, has recently issued a frank and explicit statement of the characteristic of this method. "The business of the science of religion," he said, "is to discover all the facts necessary to an understanding of the growth and history of

religions. The business of the *applied* science is to use the discovered facts to show that Christianity is the highest manifestation of the religious spirit, to see what each religion lacks when compared with Christianity and wherein it improves on them." [1] So Dr. Clarke, like Professor Jevons, starts with the hypothesis that Christianity is the absolute religion and proceeds, as an exponent of the science of comparative religion, to show wherein the other nine religions fall short of Christianity and wherein it improves on them. In this most popular of books on the subject we see Christianity set over against the other great religions in terms reminding us of Harnack's essay. Indeed the very word "pleroma" is employed to indicate the preëminence of Christianity, possessing, as the author contends, everything of spiritual value to be found in the other religions plus ideal elements peculiar to it alone. In other words, Christianity is made the criterion for evaluating all the non-Christian faiths on the ground that

[1] From an address to the students of Hartford Theological Seminary.

it is the one only perfect, the absolute religion, alone worthy to be universalized. See the picturesque design on the cover of the book, visualizing this sectarian standpoint.

Next there appeared a succession of monographs on the extant great religions, issued by the London Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, carrying the claim of Clarke's book further still, doing scant justice to the non-Christian systems in the sectarian ardor with which Christianity was discussed. These monographs, written by men with the missionary spirit, exemplify what may be termed the missionary method of approaching the non-Christian religions, the method which proceeds on the assumption that all religions may be classified as true and false, revealed and natural, divine and human. In the former class stands Christianity—and Judaism in so far as the origins of Christianity are rooted therein; in the other class all the other religions are grouped. Moreover, the missionary feels himself divinely ordained to bring to benighted pagans the one, only, true,

divine, revealed religion and if possible convert them to it. The outstanding example of this missionary "call" is the Mohammedanism of the Prophet who enjoined his followers to make converts by force if need be, because refusal to acknowledge and obey Allah is rebellion and rebellion must be suppressed, by persuasion if possible and if not, then by force.[2] To be sure, these aggressions described by Mohammed were motivated on political no less than on religious grounds, for he, being head of a church-state, regarded the two as identical. On the other hand, we have to note that in his aggressive policy he tolerated "the revealed religions, Judaism and Christianity," yet constraining their adherents to abandon their error and submit to Allah.[3] It is in this spirit that the otherwise excellent monographs referred to were prepared. They remind one of the East India Treaty which England enacted in 1813, including a "missionaries' charter" which provided "for the introduction of

[2] See the Koran, Suras 16:37, 84; 29:45; 42:12, 47, 64, 257.
[3] *Ibid.*, Suras 16:126; 42:12, 13, 14 and elsewhere.

religion into British dominions in the Far East." As if there had been no religion in that region before—the land which has produced more religion than aught else; as if there were no "feeling after God if haply He might be found," in Cashmere, in Benares, and Calcutta; as if spirituality were nonexistent among those who meditate on the banks of the Jumna, the Indus, and the Ganges!

Following these monographs there came the work of Ameer Seyd, for many years a judge on the British bench in Bengal, setting forth, with Islamic zeal, the finest features of Mohammedanism and over against them the worst in Christianity—reminding one of the familiar fable of Æsop on the Forester and the Lion. Walking together they fell to discussing the inevitable question, "Which is the stronger, a lion or a man?" Finding it quite impossible to solve the problem to their mutual satisfaction, they came suddenly upon a piece of statuary representing a man in the act of throwing down a lion. "There," said the woodsman, "you see the man is the stronger."

"Ah, yes!" said the lion, "but their positions would have been reversed if a lion had been the sculptor."

The application of the fable is obvious. Too many prejudiced Christians have been the sculptors of the non-Christian faiths and too many prejudiced non-Christians have essayed to carve the features of Christianity. Lamentable failures have been scored on both sides.

Lastly, there came that mammoth convention at Chicago in 1893, the World's Parliament of Religions, an epoch-making assembly for which we should still be waiting had not the revelations of comparative religion been in some measure made known and had not "the sacred books of the East" been already discovered and translated into the leading languages of the world. Who that was privileged to see it can ever forget the magnificent spectacle of the procession of the world's great faiths! In the forefront walked Charles C. Bonney, a Swedenborgian layman, arm in arm with Cardinal Gibbons, the then highest dig-

nitary of the Roman Catholic Church in this country. Behind them walked Christian clergyman and Jewish rabbi, Confucian moralist and Greek Church bishop. Mohammedan teacher and Buddhist monk, Baptist missionary and Hindu seer—one hundred and twenty-eight pairs in a triumphal procession of brotherhood! Would that some painter had been present to put on canvas that memorable scene, symbolic of the death knell of sectarian exclusiveness, prophetic of the coming peace among the conflicting faiths of mankind. And yet, at the sessions of the Parliament it was made plain that the ideal of religious relationship was still far from understood. For, one after another of the representatives of the various religions claimed that his particular variety of religion had in it that which warranted the expectation of its eventual absorption of all the rest. Not a word did any delegate say of world-unity in religion except as conceived in terms of the ultimate triumph of his own religion over all other religions. The fervent Buddhist pictured the universal sway of

Gautama's gospel. The enthusiastic Mohammedan made a like claim for the certain victory of Islamism. The eloquent, astute rabbi astounded his hearers by his presentation of Judaism in terms of universal religion, while the devout, mystic Christian prayed "for the redemption of the world through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." But the fact that the selfsame claim was made by each for his own faith made the claim itself ridiculous. Each of these distinguished men wished to encourage himself with his followers that their religion is sure to be universal, that the flowing tide is with them, but what a cold douche that facile optimism receives when we observe that their claims are mutually contradictory!

What, then, is the corrective for this narrow, nefarious, provincial, chauvinistic sectarianism, analogous to the nationalism that has been on the increase during the past fifty years? There are those who advocate a return to the religious cosmopolitanism exemplified by the Free Religious Association of America, just as there are those who would

remedy the deplorable species of nationalism that prevails by a return to the cosmopolitanism of Goethe and Schiller, of Addison and Goldsmith, of Rousseau and D'Alembert, and of Thomas Paine, who said, "the world is my country," and stoutly refused to ally himself with any one nation exclusively. But no, the real remedy both in the political and in the religious realm is to be sought in the recognition of and respect for differing religious types as for differing national types. Too long have we dwelt on the resemblances, the elements common to all religions. It is time we took account of the differences which comparative religion reveals no less than the likenesses. For, is not the life of a religion in those very features which differentiate it from its neighbors? The life of Christianity, for instance, is surely in the Sonship of Jesus Christ. Eliminate that, ignore that, and the very essence of the Christian religion will be forfeited because it is the specific doctrine that characterizes Christianity, without which it would cease to be Christian. Mutual tolerance is undoubt-

edly to be admired, mutual affection despite differences is more admirable still, but no appreciation is worthy of the name that involves indifference to differences that touch vital ideas; rather must such an attitude be regarded as an index of spiritual lassitude. Nay more, the sole cure for the evil of sectarianism lies in a frank acknowledgment of differences and a genuine, deep-seated desire to respect them, such respect the *sine qua non* of inter-religious fellowship and coöperation.

In our political thinking we have reached the point where we see what a despicable simile is the melting pot as descriptive of America, for we know that each of the nations represented in our heterogeneous population has some excellence peculiarly its own and this we would fain incorporate into the making of the American ideal. Therefore, instead of likening America to a melting pot in which all the fine and precious characteristics of the various national types among us are to be obliterated and lost, I would compare America to a crown studded with precious

jewels, each gem the contribution of one or another of the many nationalities that make up our American commonwealth. In our political thinking we have reached the point where we see that the life of every nation is of inestimable worth and that, just as the individuality of every single person must be respected and preserved if we are to have an ideal social state, so that which is fine and distinctive in each of the various national types must be respected and preserved if we are to have a true internationalism. Similarly, in our religious thinking we must reach the point where we see that real unity can be attained not by obliterating unlikenesses but by adopting the conception of mutual religious interrelationship, seeing the unique excellence which each of the religions has to contribute to the enhancement of all the rest and receiving in return their manifold contributions toward the enrichment of its own gospel.

We rejoice to realize that as a result of the revelations of comparative religion Christian missionary enterprise in the Orient is more

and more abandoning its original practice of insisting that the non-Christian residents there are forever "lost" unless they accept the Christian scheme of salvation. At the annual meeting of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, held in Boston in 1894 (the year following the World's Parliament of Religions), the question was raised, "Shall missionaries be allowed to go to Japan, China, India, and other Oriental countries unless they are prepared to teach the doctrines of hell and the fall of man?" But the question was promptly laid on the table; it has never been taken up since and we are safe in believing it never will be.

Just how long the nails of sectarian warfare will continue to be driven into the hands and feet of humanity no one at this time can tell. But out of the crucifixion will come a transfiguration, yea, out of the very throes of present-day controversy and schism a new conception of brotherhood will emerge, based on respect for differing types of faith, even as out of the throes of the Great World War

a new conception of justice will be brought to birth, based on respect for differing national types.

Just as fast as men and women everywhere grow to care more for spiritual freedom than for allegiance to tradition and creed while profoundly reverencing both; just as fast as men and women everywhere learn to care more for the triumph of truth than they care for the triumph of their sect, so fast will the world be prepared for that ideal religious fellowship that has been the dream of every age and of every race.

CHAPTER VI

AN ORGANIC FELLOWSHIP OF FAITHS

Before entering upon a discussion of this ideal religious fellowship and the prerequisites for its realization, let me register my profound and abiding sense of indebtedness to the late Dr. Francis Ellingwood Abbot, philosopher, author, editor, and one of the founders of the Free Religious Association of America. Without the stimulus derived from his exposition of the organic constitution of the universe this chapter could not have been written.

Time was when as yet none of the historical religions existed. In that remote antiquity religion took on its simplest form. Primitive man believed that he stood in vital relation to the mysterious forces of Nature. He believed that they had it in their power to help or to harm him. Accordingly he praised them with his offerings, appeased them with his sacrifices.

But in the course of centuries the primordial religion became differentiated into religions; the genus religion produced species, historical religions. And each one of these historical religions in turn became a genus to its species, the sects. And then each one of these sects in turn became a genus to its species, subsects, or right and left wings as we popularly call them. And finally we have the individual men and women members of these right and left wings—specimens of the subspecies.

What caused the genus religion to become differentiated into species, historical religions? The answer must be given in terms of Nature's law according to which all growth or development is made possible only by the self-differentiation of the genus into species. The only way in which the young tree can grow is by self-differentiation into branches, twigs, leaves and their organic coöperation makes possible the life of the tree. Similarly religion could develop only by self-differentiation into special or historical religions. And this development was brought about by founders, prophets,

leaders, teachers, emphasizing some one particular aspect of the genus religion, as we see on reading the sacred scriptures of these historical religions. There we discover in each a dominant note, serving to differentiate the religious system from all the other systems.

But no sooner had these historical religions come into existence, than they entered on a career of mutual antagonism and hostility, the very opposite of what we see in the tree. For, the branches, twigs, and leaves, far from living in enmity one toward another, or even in exclusive independence of one another, engage in a coöperative task; each reaches out to the air and light in order to utilize them for the benefit of the tree; each discharges its peculiar function in the economy of the total organism—an harmonious organic coöperation, in which all the parts are duly coördinated and at the same time subordinated to the whole, the tree depending on them all as one organic whole.

But when we turn to religion, differentiated into historical religions, we find no such harmonious organic coöperation; on the con-

trary we find jealousy, rivalry, antagonism, insubordination of the parts to their higher whole. Only as a vision, as an ideal, as a mental picture of what it is supremely desirable to have, does organic coöperation of all the religions exist. For, the melancholy truth is that the seven extant great religions have never transcended the stage of differentiation, have never achieved that unity in diversity which we see exemplified in the tree, have never matched the harmonious coöperation and subordination which every organism reveals. It should be understood that the term *organism* is here used not in that exclusive sense which makes it applicable only to the "spiritual universe" of Professor Adler's philosophy—a completed system of interrelated personalities in which every member is necessary to the whole and the whole necessary to every member, the number of members infinite, the relation necessary and all the members of equal worth; a conception of organism for which he has proposed the name "metorganic," to distinguish it from the simple, empirical sense in which the term is commonly

used and which derives directly from observation of Nature. Given the spiritual sense of the term as a criterion of what organism means, this empirical usage will be pronounced inaccurate and insufficient. Still it is to be remembered that, to use Professor Adler's words, "nowhere do we find in Nature any complete representation of such an arrangement" as is manifest in the spiritual acceptation of the term. Yet in the tree, in the human body, and perchance also in the solar system (if the revelations of modern astronomy are to be relied upon) examples are furnished of an actual system in which all the parts are duly coördinated and simultaneously subordinated to their higher whole. It is with this connotation of the term organism that we are here concerned as supplying the *motif,* or ground, on which an organic fellowship of faiths may be founded. Now what we have to note concerning the historical religions is that they do not illustrate the organic relationships revealed in Nature. On the contrary, each of them, though a mere branch, has regarded itself as the tree; each,

though only a part, has claimed to be the whole; each, though merely an organ, has looked upon itself as the organism. And what is thus true of the great religions is equally true of their sects. They, too, have failed to see their right and lawful place as parts of a higher whole, to be mutually coördinated and simultaneously subordinated to their higher whole.

Take, for example, the familiar Christian sects. Instead of seeing themselves as the children of a common parent, Protestantism; as grandchildren of a common grandparent, Christianity; as great-grandchildren of Judaism, each has at some time set itself up as the only true Christianity. Each, with more or less insistence, though itself only a branch, has declared itself to be the tree; each has practiced an ambitious insubordination and thereby defeated realization of that harmonious cooperation patterned for man in the organic life of Nature.

And in this failure of the great religions and of their sects to see themselves as species of a

genus, as organs of an organism, as parts of a whole, as branches of a tree, as coequals in duties and in rights—in that deplorable failure lies the origin of all religious wars to exterminate rivals, the origin of all persecution, of all missionary enterprise to convert the so-called heathen, the origin of all sectarianism or exclusiveness in religion. The word "sect" is derived from the Latin "sectum," meaning cut off. Hence a sect is a part of humanity that has cut itself off from all the rest in order to live for itself and convert all the rest into material for its own growth. Whenever a political party in a state acts for itself alone and not also for the universal nation as its higher whole, it misconceives its true place and function, it betrays the nation by partisan misgovernment simply because it has cut itself off from its higher whole and acts as if it were that whole. Similarly whenever a religious body acts for itself alone and refuses to subordinate itself to the higher whole of which it is only a part, when it aspires to be the Church Universal by converting all its rivals, it

misconceives its true place and mission; it becomes an actual hindrance to religious progress just because it has cut itself off from its own higher whole and claims to be itself that higher whole. It is everywhere a characteristic of the sect, whether in politics or in religion, that it looks on all other sects not as coequals and cooperative organs in the life of an organism which includes them all within itself, but rather as enemies to be conquered or converted.

When it is claimed, as it so often has been in the past, that Christianity is the only true religion, Protestantism the only true Christianity, the Episcopal Church the only true Protestant Church, the "High," or the "Low," or the "Broad," church the only true, Christian, Protestant, Episcopal Church, we see sectarianism doing its deadly work and paralyzing all effort to make religious brotherhood a reality in the world.

At that Parliament of Religions in Chicago, to which reference has already been made, no one saw the true ideal of religious fellowship; no one looked upon the religions there repre-

sented as coequals in a sublime organic relationship; no one saw that for lack of organic morality as patterned in every living organism the great religions missed fulfilling their highest possible mission as coöperators in the task of helping humanity to live its true life as one vast organic whole.

But when, in the distant future, the sects great and small, as a result of practice in organic morality shall have become thoroughly ashamed of their sectarianism and all their petty and puerile claims of supremacy and universality shall have been set aside; when all religious bodies shall have unfeignedly acknowledged themselves as merely parts of a whole, organs of an organism, then another World's Parliament of Religions will be convened to point the way to a fellowship of faiths in which the principles of coördination and subordination will be reaffirmed and hold sway as they do in every organism—the parts all duly coördinated and all subordinated to their higher whole. But at once the question will be asked, where is this higher whole to which these

religions are to be subordinated? And I must frankly answer, as yet it has no objective existence. It exists only in the minds of a few isolated thinkers as a dream, a vision, as the *germ* out of which the true and organic fellowship of faiths will eventually be evolved. Nor indeed should this fact surprise us, because it has its exact parallel in the history of the United States. In 1783 there was no such objective reality as the nation of the United States. That existed only in the minds of Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and their political coworkers, as a dream, a vision, the *germ* out of which the organic fellowship of states would eventually be evolved. In 1783 there existed only a loose federation of thirteen independent colonies, but no higher whole to which they could be subordinated. But when, in 1787, these thirteen colonies, through their representatives, agreed to act coördinately and to subordinate themselves to a higher whole expressed in the Constitution of the United States, then the dream, the vision, the ideal of a nation of the United States became a con-

crete fact. In other words, the nation of the United States shaped itself out of the thirteen colonies by their subordinating themselves as organs to their higher organism.

To-day there exists no organized fellowship of faiths. All we see is a trend in the direction of a world-church or religious society. The "merger" movement steadily points to the coming harmonious organic coöperation, a unity analogous to that which we see in the tree and in every other organism; one tree with many branches, one body with many members, one organism with many organs, and one subtle lifeblood coursing through the whole, making each part kin with every other. To-day we see it only in the minds of a few isolated souls, the germ of an historical world church, to be eventually evolved, if progress in the direction of the ideal continues and voluntary self-subordination of the part to the whole is practiced. That is the fundamental and inexorable condition upon which its realization depends—a voluntary self-subordination, analogous to that of the branches, the twigs, and the leaves

to the whole tree. Four additional prerequisites there are of which account must be taken. In briefest form they are the following:

First, all the *Bibles* of the great religions, with their respective inferior and superior contents, must stand on a basis of recognized equality as *human* literature, and their moral and religious value be determined by enlightened reason and conscience.

Second, all the *Masters* of the great religions must stand on a basis of recognized equality as *human* leaders, each to be revered and followed according to the truth he has to teach and the inspiration that may be derived from the story of his life.

Third, all *religious organizations,* with their differences of form and creed, must stand on a basis of recognized equality as *human* institutions, to be evaluated by the measure in which they satisfy human needs and the contributions they make to the religious progress of mankind.

Fourth, all the *sects, great and small,* must confess, with unalloyed sincerity, that their

Bible is only a part and not the whole of religious truth, that their founder is only one among the many spiritual stars with which the firmament of religion has been studded and not the only Way, Truth, and Life.

Of course, we are very far off from the fulfillment of these prerequisites. But just as surely as the Peace Conference at The Hague in 1897 foreshadowed the coming of a true League of Nations, based upon organic morality, at which the present League has not as yet arrived, so surely will the *coming* World's Parliament of Religions foreshadow a Fellowship of Faiths built upon the organic idea, with its two principles of coördination and subordination.

And just exactly as at Philadelphia, in 1787, the dream of political unity was realized by the voluntary self-subordination of the separate colonies to the higher whole of the United States, so also, by a like obedience of the separate religions to the law of organic oneness, will the dream of a religious unity, a fellowship of faiths, be realized. But the separate

religions will have to wait for it, just as those thirteen jealous colonies had to wait for the one nation of the United States. And those religions will wait in vain for that consummation unless, like the independent colonies, they learn to subordinate themselves to the higher whole of which they are only parts.

CHAPTER VII

UNITY, NOT UNIFORMITY

From what has thus far been said it must be clear that organic unity in religion no more involves uniformity of belief, or of worship, or of church government, than does the organic political unity of the United States involve uniformity of statutes, or of rights, or of customs. In both unities the existence of diversities is as essential as in the case of the tree with its branches, twigs, and leaves. The very last thing to be desired by believers in a fellowship of faiths is a uniform religion in which all distinctive features that are fine and helpful in the historical religions have been obliterated. Much less is the effacement of the separate religions themselves desirable for unity. The thirteen colonies did not efface themselves when they agreed to unite in the new nation of the United States. Neither will the historical religions efface themselves when the hour of their organic union shall have arrived. A *sectarian*

death each of them must die, of necessity, but in *spiritual substance* will they all survive.

"One religion for everybody" is surely a shallow and vain expectation. On the other hand it is reasonable to believe that there will be a steady increase of agreement on debated religious questions, just as in the field of natural science unanimity has already been reached on many a disputed issue. Through the conflict of opinion among minds governed by respect for scientific method, a body of accepted truth has been established among scientific men. And when theologians shall have risen to the plane of scientific men, then theology, the science of religion, will take a place among the sciences, which it has hitherto held only in theory. But no one need fear universal uniformity even then, for no matter what measure of unanimity be reached, there will always be, in a growing world, a residuum, in theology as in physics, upon which agreement remains to be realized. Certain it is that a finite being living in an infinite universe can never hope to say the last word on any subject.

CHAPTER VIII

THE BAHAI MOVEMENT AND ITS MISSION

In as much as a fellowship of faiths is at once the dearest hope and ultimate goal of the Bahai Movement, it behooves us to take cognizance of it and its mission. So modern is this movement that the first public news of it to reach the United States was only thirty-two years ago at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago. There, at that mammoth convention, a Presbyterian missionary from Bayreuth, Syria, closed an appeal for missionary support with these impressive words: "Just outside the fortress of Acca on the Syrian coast there died a few months ago the famous Persian sage and Babi saint named Baha 'Ullah (the Glory of God), who has given utterance to sentiments so noble, so Christlike, that I cannot do better than close my address with these his words: 'These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away

and the most great peace shall come; all nations shall be one in faith and all men shall be brothers.' "

To-day this religious movement has a million and more adherents, including people from all parts of the globe and representing a remarkable variety of race, color, class, and creed. It has been given literary expression in a veritable library of Asiatic, European, and American works to which additions are annually made as the movement grows and grapples with the great problems that grow out of its cardinal teachings. It has a long roll of martyrs to the cause for which it stands, twenty thousand in Persia alone, proving it to be a movement worth dying for as well as worth living by.

From its inception it has been identified with Baha 'Ullah, who paid the price of prolonged exile, imprisonment, bodily suffering, and mental anguish for the faith he cherished—a man of imposing personality as revealed in his writings, characterized by intense moral earnestness and profound spirituality, gifted with

the selfsame power so conspicuous in the character of Jesus, the power to appreciate people ideally, that is, to see them at the level of their best and to make even the lowest types think well of themselves because of potentialities within them to which he pointed but of which they were wholly unaware; a prophet whose greatest contribution was not any specific doctrine he proclaimed, but an informing spiritual power breathed into the world through the example of his life and thereby quickening souls into new spiritual activity. Surely a movement of which all this can be said deserves, nay, compels our respectful recognition and sincere appreciation.

It had its rise in Mohammedan Persia nearly a century ago when that fair country was torn by religious schism and sectarian strife. In the words of Abdul Baha, son of Baha 'Ullah: "At a time when in the Orient there existed the utmost state of strife and sedition, when warfare raged between the religions and between the various sects, darkness encompassed the horizon of the Orient and each

religion asserted its claim over the other, at such time and under such circumstances His Holiness, Baha 'Ullah, shone from the horizon of the East."

Just as to-day increasing Christian sectarianism has given rise to a movement among the Episcopalians for a "World Conference on Faith and Order" among the Presbyterians, Baptists, and Congregationalists in Canada for a "United Church," so eighty-one years ago in the Orient under kindred conditions a corresponding movement arose in the interest of world unity in religion. In other words, the Bahai Movement originated as a reaction from those religious schisms and feuds to which Abdul Baha referred. Their prevalence in Persia in the 'forties of the last century points to the cause whence the most characteristic demand of the Bahai movement arose, the demand for unity. Taking precedence over all else in its gospel is the message of unity in religion—a unity such as has been described in the preceding chapter, a unity not to be compassed by even the *Christian* name, great and

deep as is the reverence of Bahais for that name. For they rightly hold, as did their illustrious founder, that it is not enough to have fellowship in Christ, or in Moses, or in Buddha, it must be all-embracing in its scope and strictly universal in its allegiance. And, indeed, if human brotherhood is ever to be anything more than the grim caricature that we see to-day in the rivalries, jealousies, antipathies, and deadly competitions among the religions and among their sects, then I hold that it is of the utmost importance that there should be in the world at least one such movement as the Bahai, dedicated to promoting the realization of that sublime ideal.

Supplementing the gospel of unity in religion is that of other unities; racial, linguistic, economic, ethical; set forth in that thesaurus of religious literature which constitutes the sacred scriptures of the Bahai movement and of which a noble edition was recently published under the competent editorship of the Secretary of the National Council, Mr. Horace Holley. Nay, more, these great unities have been sum-

marized and expounded with consummate skill and in the exquisite poetical prose of Abdul Baha in his "Divine Philosophy." There, under the inspiring headline of "independent investigation of truth," we find: "The unity of humanity, the unity of the foundations of all religions, the harmony of science and religion, equality of the sexes, the abolition of prejudice, universal peace, solution of the economic problem, a universal language, an impartial international court for maintaining world peace," ideals with which all liberal people are in hearty accord. Only as to the *mode* in which these ideals are to be realized will differences of opinion obtain. And though both Baha 'Ullah and Abdul Baha have made what must be regarded as permanent contributions in pointing the way to a realization of their ideals, it is certain that some of their affirmations will have to be modified, if not superseded, by reason of changed conditions which they could not have foreseen; witness for example what has been written regarding Esperanto as the coming universal language and of "focusing at-

tention on resemblances to the neglect of differences" as the way to attaining unity in religion.

Just now the paramount need of the Bahai Movement is an authoritative translation of the principal works of the founder with explanatory comments, to the end that the reader be left in no doubt as to the precise meaning of what Baha 'Ullah wrote, especially in regard to crucial points of belief and of practice on which differences of interpretation still persist. It was surely unfortunate to have a monograph on "Bahaism" appear while the precise meaning of the Master's thought, as given by the author, is still in dispute.

It is the crowning glory of the Bahai Movement that while deprecating sectarianism in its preaching, it has faithfully practiced what it preached by refraining from becoming itself a sect. Far from endeavoring to convert all outside its fellowship to such doctrines as are generally held by the members—whether of "theism," or of "revelation," or of "intuition" as a criterion of truth—it has assiduously

sought to help men and women of all persuasions to realize the highest ideals of religion. Nothing could be more foreign to the spirit of this movement or further from its purpose than the attempt to displace all existing religions by itself. It frowns upon the notion that any one of the existing great religions will ever triumph over all the rest. And, far from bidding any one sever his connection with the religion he has inherited or adopted, the Bahai Movement bids him cling to it, so long as reason and conscience sanction his allegiance. Thus in the best sense of the word it is a missionary movement. Its representatives do not attempt to impose any beliefs upon others, whether by argument or by bribery; rather do they seek to put beliefs that have illumined their own lives within the reach of those who feel they need illumination. No, not a sect, not a part of humanity cut off from all the rest, living for itself and aiming to convert all the rest into material for its own growth; no, not that, but a *leaven,* causing spiritual fermentation in all religions, quickening them

with the spirit of catholicity and fraternalism —such I take it is the essence of the Bahai Movement.

Clearly, then, we are dealing with a fellowship, an influence, a leaven, a movement that fights shy of sectarian enthusiasms, that abhors the formation of a close corporation with exclusive privileges, for that has been a greater obstruction to brotherhood than either kingly ambition or commercial greed. This movement has no priesthood, no college, no ecclesiastical hierarchy, but, on the contrary, is conspicuous for its distrust of organization, constitutions, by-laws, and other familiar fetters of the western world. But I see foreboding signs, I hear disquieting rumors of a tendency among some within this movement to have it crystallized within a sectarian mold, to have it stand explicitly for a certain set of theological ideas, and then make this the test of fellowship. No more serious or fateful calamity could befall this movement than to have it relegated to the limbo of sectarianism. Let it hold fast to its distrust of organization, let it permit only

that minimum of organization which is essential to the fulfillment of its leavening work, and not only will there lie before it an ever increasing field of usefulness but, forfeiting none of its beneficent power, it will go on from strength to strength in the fulfillment of its invaluable and indispensable mission.

Close to Chicago and fronting on Lake Michigan, a Bahai temple is in process of completion. Designed by a Belgian architect—himself a Bahai—the building is symbolic of the characteristic features of the faith and, as such, marks a bold and original departure from all the traditional schools of architecture. This temple is dedicated to the free and untrammeled investigation of truth, to the harmony of science and religion, to the unity of work and worship, to the promulgation of universal brotherhood and international peace. Around the central building, open to the devoteés of every religion and of every sect, other buildings will be erected, educational and philanthropic, and these, too, as Abdul Baha said, "are to be open to the people of all nations, no line of de-

marcation will be drawn and charities will be dispensed irrespective of color, creed, or race, with love for all." Who shall say but that just as the little company of the *Mayflower,* landing on Plymouth Rock, proved to be the small beginning of a mighty nation, the ideal germ of a democracy which, if true to its principles, shall yet overspread the habitable globe, so the little company of Bahais exiled from their Persian home may yet prove to be the small beginning of a world-wide movement, the ideal germ of democracy in religion, the Universal Church of Mankind.

CHAPTER IX

ETHICAL RELIGION AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

At the very outset let it be understood that nothing is further from my purpose than an attempt to forecast the content of the religion of the future. That would seem a brazenly presumptuous and a pitifully profitless task. In his *magnum opus, An Ethical Philosophy of Life* the founder of the Ethical Movement has presented conceptions of God, worship, prayer, immortality, and consolation that may perchance become the theological substance of the religion of the future, though, of course, he makes no such claim for them; conceptions radically at variance with those current in the great religions. Incidentally, it should be remarked that these conceptions are by no means to be regarded as constituting the faith of the Ethical Movement, but rather as representative of no one but Professor Adler himself. The connotation he gives the word God, when he uses it, is that of a "commonwealth of

spirits," as against the popular monarchical idea; a spiritual organism composed of individual organs; "the godhead an infinite host of beings, a vast community of spiritual life of which each human being is, *in his inmost self*, a citizen." The object of Professor Adler's worship is just this transcendental personality, this "infinitesimal component of the infinite God," this "member of the spiritual universe," that is, his fellow man; "not indeed his earthly self, not the clay form, but the perfect godhead in him, the veiled figure, veiled by the form of flesh and blood which is often an object of loathing." This innermost essential spiritual self in his fellow man, this "infinitesimal component of the infinite God" as against "an imaginary figure floating somewhere above the clouds" is the object of Professor Adler's worship. With reference to prayer he would not slight its uses, but in so far as it is "utterance" it is for him "silenced in the presence of the Unutterable." "Any one who can pray," he says, "does not fully realize the ineffableness of the divine life." But prayer

as "a way of putting before one the moral ideal is needed"; such prayer "makes us feel ashamed and stirs to moral effort." Instead of "addressing a God beyond the sky," the new rule of prayer would be (in his judgment) to respond to "the call of the godhead in your neighbor" eliciting the latent best in him and thereby in yourself. And when, at death, this object of worship seems to have gone, consolation is to be found by realizing that it is "only the clay form that has gone, the earthly self into which a stellar ray descended." The earthly form "crumbles into a little heap of dust but the star remains, one in the endless constellation of the spiritual universe." We have not lost our mate, for, "the invincible self is unbegotten and imperishable and that which is best in us is inseparably united to that which is best in him." [1]

Such, in bare outline, are the ideas dominant in the ethical religion of Professor Adler. Whether or not they will have a place in the

[1] See Professor Adler's address of December 17, 1916, published in the *Standard*. See also the closing chapter of his *Magnum Opus* and of his *Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal*.

religion of the future remains to be seen. They have not become and may never become part of the common belief of all members of the Ethical Movement. Never can they become part of a creed of the Ethical Movement for it has no creed, nay, it is *fundamentally opposed* to the formation and establishment of a creed, aiming to protect religion from the danger of becoming petrified and the Movement from becoming stagnant and succeeding in this aim just to the degree that it continues to be a *Movement* rather than an *Attainment,* leaving to the particular group devoted to the cultivation of religion (as to every other group) the privilege and opportunity freely to take whatever religious position it will, provided it refrain from committing the Movement thereto.

Whatever the content of the religion of the future may be, we are warranted in believing that it will spring from spiritual anguish even as did the Ethical Movement and each of the historical religions.[2] Nay, it will be a two-

[2] See my *World's Great Religions,* p. 227 for illustrations of this fact.

fold anguish, if we mistake not, from which the religion of the future will originate—social and spiritual. Social, in so far as it relates to the maladjustments of society, the painfully distorted relations that obtain, for example, between parent and child, husband and wife, the various social classes, nation and nation. Spiritual, also, will the anguish be in the sense that it will relate to religious beliefs which once satisfied spiritual needs but which can serve no longer because out of accord with the best thought of the day; beliefs for which no adequate substitutes have as yet been found. For all who find themselves unable to fellowship with one or another of the historical religions and who can no longer accept the current teaching with regard to God, prayer, and worship, there exists a genuine sense of loss, a consciousness of real, spiritual suffering. From this anguish the religion of the future will, in part, originate and seek to supply the lack of the historical religions. Just how it will fulfill this function, obviously no one can now say.

CHAPTER X

THE HISTORICAL RELIGIONS AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

Any attempt at detailed description of the coming religion must be set down as futile and chimerical. Rather would I touch upon certain features of the historic religions that the religion of the future may be expected to improve upon. Reserving Christianity for separate consideration, let us note some particulars in which it is safe to assume advance upon the historic religions will be achieved. To begin with, all seven of them are based on the principle of *authority*. All alike appeal to a recognized founder as having "the words of eternal life," as having revealed all that is required for faith and practice. But the religion of the future we may well believe will have the principle of *freedom* for its basis, holding that no one founder (or all founders together) has

revealed the totality of moral and religious truth. Never yet has a complete and final code of ethics or a universally satisfying "breviary" been compiled. Nor can we believe they ever will be, seeing the diversity of spiritual taste that will ever obtain and the ever recurring rise of new social and economic conditions generating new problems for the solution of which the old formulas prove insufficient. Nor, again, can any one founder serve as the perfect exemplar for mankind; none can include within his own personality the totality of perfections possible to all persons, involving, as this does, opposite qualities like those that differentiate the sexes. Thus, while gratefully acknowledging and cherishing the moral and religious contributions made by these founders to the advancement of the spiritual life and while reverently recognizing the sublime character of each and the qualities with which each peculiarly shone, the religion of the future will deem it treason to the infinite moral ideal to bend the knee to any one prophet exclusively, or to bind the reason

to any one book exclusively. To all sacred scriptures, of the present as of the past, the religion of the future will turn, seeking in each book that which may serve to inspire and enrich the religious life. To all the great masters of religions will it bow, yet refuse to become the disciple of any one exclusively, evaluating each according to the truth he has to teach and the inspiration to be derived from the record of his life.

Once more, the *fellowship* of each of the great religions is exclusive in that it sometimes explicitly and more often tacitly admits to membership only those who accept its founder and its book. To enter the *Mohammedan* communion one must accept Mohammed as the Prophet of God and the Koran as the divinely revealed standard of faith and conduct—a test that excludes all but two and a half millions of the people of the earth. To come into the *Christian* communion of the orthodox type one must accept Jesus as Savior and God; if the heterodox type be sought, one must accept Jesus as, at least, an

all-sufficing guide to the moral life—tests that shut out two-thirds of the human race. But the fellowship of the religion of the future will be cosmopolitan and free, refraining from the requirement of assent to any doctrine or belief whatsoever; uniting men on the only basis that is truly universal, namely, the desire to live upward toward the triple ideal of truth, love, and duty, let their theology be what it may. Assuredly, it is not enough for men and women to be brothers and sisters in *Christ,* or in *Moses,* or in *Mohammed;* Christian exclusiveness is just as intolerable as any other. We must be brothers and sisters in *Humanity* with all the rest of mankind; that is what a true fellowship requires, what democracy in religion means. With no lesser ideal can the modern spirit, educated in catholicity and in appreciation, be permanently satisfied. Christian unity, toward which so many noteworthy attempts are now being made, is to be welcomed indeed and, above all, as a step toward that nobler, more inclusive unity which the presence among us of millions of Jews

and an ever increasing number of Mohammedans, Buddhists, and Hindus calls for as never before. For the consummation of that sublime ideal the religious world is far from prepared. But when, in the distant future, the sects, great and small, as a result of practice in organic morality, shall have become thoroughly ashamed of their sectarianism and of their puerile claims of supremacy and universality shall have been set aside; when all shall have unfeignedly acknowledged themselves merely parts of a whole, organs of an organism in which the party are all coördinated and simultaneously subordinated to the whole, then and not till then will the noble dream of a fellowship of faiths be fulfilled.

CHAPTER XI

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

Attention has been directed to the notion that some one of the historic religions will supersede all the rest and so become the religion of the future. The utter futility of this expectation was admirably expressed by the brilliant and lamented Hindu, Vivekananda. Asked if he believed that any one of the seven great religions would eventually supplant all the rest, he replied: "If anybody hopes that any one of the Great Religions will triumph over all the rest and become the universal religion to him I say: Brother, yours is an impossible hope. If anybody dreams of the survival of any religion and the destruction of all the rest, I pity him from the bottom of my heart." Yet this dream is still cherished by many a devoteé of each of the

great religions. For instance, Dharmapala, the distinguished Buddhist of Ceylon, said in my hearing, "The marvel of Buddhism is its incontestable capacity for expansion and this saves it from ever becoming outgrown." The lamented Jeneghier D. Cola, who represented Zoroastrianism at the World's Parliament of Religions, told me that he considered the expansive power of his religion "literally boundless."

But our concern is more especially with Christianity. What may be said for it? There are those—notably Professor Eucken in Germany, M. Loisy in France, Dean Inge in England, Dr. Fosdick in the United States—who hold that Christianity is destined to survive all other religions because it has "an inherent expansiveness," fitting it to be forever identical with the best ethical thinking of every age. Yet a candid examination of this and all the other historic faiths reveals the fact that for each of them there is a limit beyond which it cannot "expand" and at the same time retain its identity. Well enough for Dr. Fos-

dick to maintain that the Christianity of Augustine advanced upon that of the apostle Paul, that of Luther upon Augustine's, and Beecher's, in turn, upon the Christianity of Luther. But the progressive professor of Union Theological Seminary seems to think that this process of advance can go on indefinitely without loss of Christianity's identity. Nay, running through all these historic Christianities from the first century to our own time is a common thread of belief, namely, that Jesus differed from all other human beings not only in *degree* but also in *kind* and that He is the *sole* Savior of mankind. As long as that thread remains the religion continues to be Christian. In other words, there is a limit beyond which Christianity cannot vary and remain Christian, just as in the evolution of life forms there was a limit beyond which reptiles could not vary and remain reptiles. When the anatomical *creeping* structure became, by "natural selection," a *flying* structure, then that which was reptile became bird and was therefore no longer called reptile but

bird. So in the evolution of liberal religion when a man surrendered his belief in the specified uniqueness of Jesus and in him as the *sole* Savior of mankind, he ceased to be a Christian and was in duty bound to adopt a different descriptive name for himself. By a like process of inquiry it could be shown that there is a corresponding "limit" in each of the other six great religions, a limit beyond which it cannot "expand" and retain its identity. Assuredly is this notion of continuous expansiveness illusory, as illusory as the rapid movement of the landscape to the passenger looking out from the window of the "express" on which he rides. Whatever progress any one of the great religions, as such, can achieve is inevitably conditioned by the retention of that cardinal, differentiating characteristic without which the identity of the religion would disappear. Thus, the "inherent expansiveness" attributed to each of the great religions by earnest representatives is no guarantee of its survival, for, under the influence of modern thought it might so expand as to be beyond

recognition and thus require a new name, the *raison d'être* of the original name having disappeared in the expanding process. Every religion owes its name to a particular belief touching the person of its founder or some characteristic of its devoteés. Let the progress of religious thought compel the surrender of that belief and, of necessity, the original name of the religion becomes a misnomer.

A contributor to the *Methodist Review* has recently propounded an entirely different basis than that of "inherent expansiveness" to justify the dream of Christianity's triumph over all other religions. He writes: "The further I proceed in my study of the world's religions the more deeply is the impression borne in that the Christian religion alone has reached the goal. No wonder our religion is called Christianity. We have found God in Christ; the followers of other faiths through no fault of their own have never had the privilege of this experience." [1]

How truly naïve is this notion that God

[1] *Methodist Review*, May, 1921.

has vouchsafed to one-third of the human family knowledge of Himself and allowed the remaining two-thirds to live without this supreme privilege, cutting them off from it, "through no fault of their own," granting to a minority of His children that which the innocent majority is mysteriously denied. Nor has it occurred to this Methodist minister that there are Parsees who hold they have "found God" in Zoroaster, and Hindus who have found Him in Krishna, not to mention devotees of other religions who testify to a like spiritual experience and who feel the same sense of pity for unprivileged Christians that the Methodist writer expressed for "the followers of other faiths" deprived of the Christian experience "through no fault of their own."

In his latest play, entitled "The Next Religion," Zangwill makes the physician say to the church rector, "Is not Christ's religion the next religion; what have we found more beautiful and uplifting than the teachings of Jesus?" Ex-President Eliot of Harvard Uni-

versity, writing in the *Atlantic Monthly* on "The Religion of the Future," falls in with Zangwill's physician, declaring that "Jesus will remain the supreme teacher in religion," the context clearly conveying the conviction that Christianity, as the religion of Jesus, will be the religion of the future. Let me hasten to acknowledge the truth and beauty and uplifting power of the teachings of Jesus, more especially those in which he advanced upon the ethics of the Old Testament and of the Apocrypha. Yet must it be frankly confessed that the teachings of Jesus are insufficient for the needs of the modern world even as were the teachings of ancient Judaism insufficient for Jesus' day. Just as Jesus was driven beyond the so-called Mosaic Law, so modern ethical thinking has been driven beyond the ethics of Jesus, daring to supplement his teaching as he dared to supplement that of his revered predecessors. He respected the authority of Moses but he did not regard it as infallible or final. Hence he dared to advance upon the ethical precepts transmitted

from Sinai. He, therefore, is most like Jesus who in this respect follows his example, daring to differ from or advance upon him as did he upon older masters. Just here permit me emphatically to remark and with deep earnestness and intensity of conviction, that I will be second to no one in my admiration and reverence for the person and work of Jesus, yet I hold we can no more tie to the ethics of Jesus as the complete and final code that orthodox Christians regard it than the Chinese can tie to the ethics of Confucius now that rehabilitation of the empire has been established. To an ever larger number of unprejudiced scholars, caring only for the truth, whatever it may be, it is apparent that Jesus' teaching did not cover and *was not intended to cover* the *whole* of the moral life—social, national, and international—but only the ethics of personal life, his one and all absorbing concern being the moral preparedness of his people for entrance into the new order of society which God would shortly usher in through his Messiah. Pray do not imagine

that this view of the limitation Jesus set himself for his ministry is held only by ethical leaders. An Episcopalian professor writing in the *Hibbert Journal* frankly commits himself to the very same view. I quote his precise words: "Our Lord carefully refrained from expressing an opinion on political and economic problems which were beyond the scope of his mission. His concern was not with the state, but with the citizen, not so much with humanity as with man." This wise restriction of his teaching to the problems of the personal life explains the silence of Jesus on questions social, national, and international that baffle and perplex us to-day.[2] Consider, for example, that problem which did not exist in Jesus' day, the problem of the right relation of employer and employees in big business, a problem that originated about 1760 when the old domestic system of industry gave place to the factory system, machinery took the place of tools, and the long-established close relation between master and men was broken and the "wage-

[2] See the *Standard*, November, 1914, p. 95.

system" was introduced. How shall the lost relationship be restored? How shall a fair return be secured to both employees and employer for their respective parts in the process of production? What is a fair wage? These are ethical questions for which the Gospels furnish no *adequate* answer because they lay outside the scope of teaching which Jesus marked out for himself in response to the one thing needful in his time and place. As another illustration, take the problem of the state in its relation to mergers and trusts—an economic problem indeed, yet bristling with moral implications and by no means solved despite the moral help provided in the teachings of Jesus. To what extent should the state act as a moral functionary in dealing with these combinations? Be just, be generous, be compassionate, love one another, return good for evil—these Christian maxims, excellent and of imperishable worth as they are, do not help us here. We need to supplement them with more specific formulas, born out of new moral experience in the field of the problem.

Again, consider the need that just now is making itself felt more poignantly than ever, the need of an international morality, an ethical code of international relations, an essential prerequisite for world peace. Such a code is not furnished by either the Old Testament or the New; it has yet to be worked out. Certainly, in the ethical outlook of Jesus, international relations had no place and for the excellent reason that the question had not even an academic interest for anybody in his day. Palestine was then at peace, there had been no war for ninety-six years; it was a normal time. True, the Roman government taxed the Jews heavily, but they felt this would be for only a little while because Jesus, like his forerunner John the Baptist, had taught that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and with its advent there would be an end of all injustice and oppression. It does not surprise us, therefore, to find that Jesus was silent on the subject of *international* morality and confined himself to morality between man and man, the paramount moral issue of his day.

The religion of the future, then, while gratefully acknowledging and reverently cherishing the excellence and permanence of the general maxims of Jesus will seek to supplement these even as did Jesus himself supplement an ethical code thought to be complete and final by his orthodox contemporaries. For, moral truth, like scientific truth, is progressive. With the progress of civilization involving the rise of new conditions, new problems appear, and for the solution of these more light is required than any of the historic guides has furnished. Hence the religion of the future will deem it treason to the infinite moral ideal to pronounce any inherited ethical code complete and final. Moreover, it will deprecate and condemn as altogether intellectually immoral the prevailing practice, witnessed, not within the confines of Christianity alone, but in other religions besides, of doing violence to the clear and unmistakable meaning of general scriptural precepts in order to make them cover specific moral situations, such as have been cited, but for which those precepts do not provide a solution and were not intended

so to do. The religion of the future, repudiating this pernicious practice, ethically unwarranted and intellectually confusing, will point to the Righteousness beyond the righteousnesses made known to us in the scriptures; a Righteousness "the plenitude of whose being has never yet been revealed, the radiance of whose glory has never yet been uncloaked; a Righteousness of whose ineffable light our highest visions are but feeble rays," the Righteousness that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day" and to be *endlessly* approximated. Truly do we pursue a fleeing goal. The ideal flies ever before us and is often most passionately pursued when it seems furthest away. The ideal grows as we climb to it. The climbing path never ends because ever and anon new summits come into view. So "fearfully and wonderfully" are we humans made that we can never be permanently satisfied with anything short of the infinite. Any statical heaven, however finished and fine, could be at best but a temporary resting place; once rested and refreshed we would wish to resume the upward way.

CHAPTER XII

THE BIBLE AND THE RELIGION OF THE FUTURE

Far from ignoring or rejecting the Old and New Testaments (or any other sacred scriptures) the religion of the future will gratefully give them a place among the sources of moral instruction and inspiration, selecting such passages as serve to enhance the spiritual life. Even as the tree draws from the surrounding earth, water, air, the materials wherewith to build the strength of its trunk and the beauty of its foliage, so the religion of the future will, in its formative process, draw upon the Old and New Testaments and upon all other historic written resources to give its gospel strength, beauty, inspiration.

But in addition to its reliance on these for the conduct of life, the religion of the future will have to depend on new moral experience

to furnish the needed light on problems for which the ancient "revelations" did not provide. Many and varied are the moral issues that were unknown to the founders of the great religions, issues that have arisen as a result of new conditions in modern life. For instance, the right relation of employer and employee in big industry, an issue only a century and a half old, dating from "the industrial revolution"; the moral functioning of the state in the matter of "mergers"—an issue no older than the middle of the last century; the securing of international peace, an issue which, on its present world-inclusive scale, did not exist for the ethical writers of antiquity and for which, in consequence, no *adequate* aid has been supplied. And precisely as it was out of moral experience—experience in the field of moral relations—that the insight was reached (which eventually took on the character of "divine revelation") so too out of new moral experience under new conditions must the new insight be forthcoming. Both Catholic and Protestant Christians agree in

believing that the "revelation" recorded in the New Testament suffices to meet the moral needs of man for all time—a "complete and final revelation," one to which humanity can ever turn for guidance, one that stands in no need of supplementation because interpretable to meet every need in every age. But I venture to affirm that the religion of the future will look askance at the liberties that have been taken with the text of "revelation" to make it teach what modern ethical thinking has worked out. The coming religion will, I take it, frankly construe every text as it was intended to be understood by the writer and not twist or turn it into a significance it cannot lawfully bear. In other words, the religion of the future, while making the utmost possible of the moral formulas of the past, will bravely endeavor to supply new formulas to meet the moral issues for which the older ones do not suffice. Moral problems there are, touching the right relation of parents and children, of men and women in marriage, of the citizen and the state, of the

individual nation to the family of nations—problems on which there is as yet no consensus of opinion as to where the right lies, problems with which the New Testament did not deal and for the excellent reasons already cited. How shall these and kindred problems be solved? How shall it be determined what the right relations are in each case? The religion of the future, while doing full justice to the New Testament revelation, will rely, for additional moral knowledge adequate to solving the problems, on moral experience in the several fields where the problems exist.

In the Cathedral Museum at Florence I read the specifications prepared by Brunelleschi for the completing of the great dome. The celebrated architect closed the series of instructions for those who would follow him with these significant words, *"La pratica insegna che si has da seguire"*—"practice teaches what the next step to be taken shall be." When the dome was about to be closed in at the height of fifty-seven feet the master builders then in charge of the work should

determine how to complete it; their experience, according to Brunelleschi, was to be the teacher when the final stage of the great architectural task would be reached. So in constructing the dome for the cathedral of the moral life, the religion of the future will make moral experience the teacher, practice in moral architecture will determine the content of the new formulas for new conditions and so supplement the imperishable teaching transmitted from the past. It is in this sense that practice precedes theory. "If ye but do the will ye shall know the doctrine." By striving to get into right relations with others—in the home, in the factory, in the state—we acquire the moral experience that will culminate in learning what those relations *ought* to be. By living the life of love we arrive at the spiritual meaning of love. By working toward an ideal of international justice, we learn at last what the ideal actually is. By experiencing the deeper content of the moral life we approximate adequate statement of the moral ideal.

Thus the religion of the future will be dis-

tinguished from Christianity and the other historic faiths by this reliance on moral experience to supplement the permanent helpful elements in the "revelations" of the past; by the spontaneous abdication of the principle of authority in favor of free reason and moral experience as joint sovereigns of the ethical realm and as the true fountain sources of the "fuller light" that yet needs to be shed on the path of the moral life. Nay more, the religion of the future by allying itself with the scientific method of truth-seeking will be adequately protected against the danger of dogmatism and of self-commitment to "absolute finalities." That alliance will serve to keep it ever free for self-readjustment to the discovery of new facts, or of new light on old facts, remembering that infallibility is not for fallible man and that ever closer approximation to the unattainable ideal is his highest possible attainment.

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